William J. Clinton
Presidential History Project

Briefing Materials

Charlene Barshefsky

February 25, 2005

Prepared by Jill Abraham, Research Assistant
February 2005
**Charlene Barshefsky Timeline**

*Prepared by Jill Abraham*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 11/22/2004*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Barshefsky earns a J.D. from Catholic University’s Columbus School of Law. (Rushford, <em>Appointments with Power</em>, p. 24)</td>
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<td>1982-1993</td>
<td>Barshefsky is a partner with Steptoe &amp; Johnson. (Rushford, <em>Appointments with Power</em>, p. 24)</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>President Clinton nominates Barshefsky Deputy United States Trade Representative (USTR). (<em>The Washington Post</em>, 03/19/1993)</td>
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The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Barshefsky is registered as a foreign agent for firms in Mexico, Canada and Japan, raising conflict of interest concerns. In response, U.S. trade officials state that Barshefsky would recuse herself from any work on NAFTA and instead primarily oversee trade relations with Asian countries. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 03/23/1993, 3/24/1993)

<table>
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<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>During Barshefsky’s Senate confirmation hearings, she is questioned about her previous work for foreign interests. (<em>The Washington Post</em>, 05/20/1993)</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>By a voice vote, the Senate confirms Barshefsky as Deputy USTR. (<em>Reuters News</em>, 05/28/1993)</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>In a speech at the National Press Club, Barshefsky warns that China needs to open further its markets to American imports by a December deadline, stating, “Absent significant liberalization...the United States will take action.” (<em>The Washington Post</em>, 11/03/1993)</td>
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</table>
The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) receives final approval from the U.S. Senate, uniting the U.S., Canada and Mexico into the world’s largest free trade zone. (*The Washington Post*, 11/21/1993)

**December**

The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is completed. The resulting agreement extends trading rules to the agricultural sector, clarifies rules for subsidies and dumping, and establishes protections for international intellectual property rights. The agreement also establishes the World Trade Organization (WTO) to replace GATT in order to settle more effectively international disputes. (Robert Z. Lawrence, “International Trade Policy in the 1990s,” in *American Economic Policy in the 1990s*, Jeffrey Franzel and Peter Orszag, eds., Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002)

**1994**

**February**

The Clinton Administration decides to impose sanctions on Japanese imports after the two countries fail to reach an agreement to reduce Japan’s trade surplus with the U.S. (*The Washington Post*, 02/13/1994)

**March**

*The New York Times* reports that Barshefsky authored a memorandum in which she expressed concern that the Mexican government may seek to block U.S. plans to bring more Latin American countries into NAFTA. (*The New York Times*, 03/01/1994)

President Clinton issues an executive order reinstating Super 301, an expired provision of the Omnibus Trade Act of 1988. Super 301 requires the Administration to identify the worst trade offenders as the first step toward imposing sanctions. After twelve months, sanctions can be imposed if the identified countries fail to negotiate an agreement. (*The Washington Post*, 03/03/1994)

**May**

Barshefsky meets with Japanese trade ministers in an attempt to restart trade negotiations. (*The New York Times*, 05/20/1994)

**July**

In a speech in Hong Kong, Barshefsky accuses China of failing to comply with global trade rules and states that China must comply with these rules if it is to become a member of the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 07/24/1994)

**October**

The Administration reaches a trade agreement with Japan, concluding fifteen months of negotiations and averting U.S. sanctions. The Japanese agree to open their insurance, telecommunications, and medical equipment markets to foreign competitors. (*The Washington Post*, 10/02/1994)
Barshefsky: 1994-1996

December  
Japan agrees to stop excluding U.S. and other foreign manufacturers of window glass and other related products from their markets. Regarding the trade agreement, Barshefsky states, “We expect to see concrete results within the next year. To the extent we don’t...there will be action under U.S. trade laws.” (The Washington Post, 12/13/1994)

Barshefsky helps coordinate the 34-nation Summit of the Americas, held in Miami, Florida. At the Summit, the countries agree to establish a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by 2005. (The Washington Post, 12/11/1994, 12/17/1994)

1995

February  
Barshefsky negotiates a trade deal with the Chinese to safeguard U.S. intellectual property rights. The deal protects American movies, music, computer software and other products from being pirated by Chinese manufacturers. (The Washington Post, 02/27/1995)

July  
Barshefsky addresses the Council of the Americas, where she notes that the Clinton Administration’s trade strategy has produced over 100 agreements in 27 months. She states that the Administration’s three-pronged trade strategy includes implementation, enforcement, and expansion. (Journal of Commerce, 07/14/1995)

November  
Barshefsky travels to China to discuss the country’s application for WTO membership. She remarks that the growing U.S. trade deficit with China is “obviously not acceptable.” She also states that U.S. trade relations with China are “marked by imbalance and lack of reciprocity.” (The Washington Post, 11/11/1995)

December  
Barshefsky warns that the United States will take “decisive action” if China continues to fail to comply with the anti-pirating agreement reached in February. (The New York Times, 12/01/1995)

1996

April  
Barshefsky travels to China to discuss the country’s failure to prevent the pirating of U.S. electronic and entertainment goods. (The Washington Post, 04/11/1996)

President Clinton appoints USTR Michael (Mickey) Kantor as Secretary of Commerce. President Clinton appoints Barshefsky to serve as the acting USTR. The Washington Post reports that Barshefsky is the likely choice to permanently replace Kantor. (The Washington Post, 04/13/1996)
Barshefsky meets with trade representatives from Japan, the European Union (EU) and Canada at the Port of Kobe, Japan, to discuss opening their domestic telecommunications markets to foreign competition. (*The New York Times*, 04/22/1996)

**May**

Barshefsky announces a list of Chinese imports that could be subject to sanctions, unless China takes “immediate action” toward stopping piracy. (*The Washington Post*, 05/16/1996)

**June**

The U.S. withdraws its threat of sanctions against China. After days of negotiations in Beijing, Barshefsky announces that China has taken legitimate steps over the past two weeks toward stopping piracy. (*The New York Times*, 06/18/1996)

**August**

Barshefsky negotiates the renewal of a trade agreement with Japan involving its semiconductor industry. The agreement is characterized as weaker than the previous agreement because it does not mandate that the foreign share of Japan’s computer chip market should reach a certain percentage level. (*The Washington Post*, 08/03/1996)

**September**

Barshefsky announces that the U.S. is imposing sanctions on Chinese textile and apparel imports because they had been shipping these items under third-country labels. (*The New York Times*, 09/07/1996)

**October**

The U.S. imposes sanctions on foreign companies doing business with Cuba. The EU announces it will challenge this action with the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 10/02/1996)

**November**

President Clinton defeats Senator Robert Dole (R-KS) in the presidential election.

**December**

At a meeting of the WTO in Singapore, 28 nations agree to remove tariffs on computers, software, and other information technology products. (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 12/13/1996)

At a news conference, President Clinton announces that he intends to nominate Barshefsky to be the USTR. (*The Washington Post*, 12/14/1996)

**1997**

**January**

President Clinton asks Congress to waive a law that would prohibit Barshefsky from serving as USTR. Legislation passed in 1995 forbids anyone who has represented a foreign government in a trade dispute from assuming the post of USTR, and Barshefsky had represented foreign clients while working as a lawyer for Steptoe & Johnson. (*The Washington Post*, 01/09/1997)
Barshefsky announces that the U.S. will begin imposing sanctions against Argentina for failing to protect U.S. drug patents. (The Washington Post, 01/16/1997)

The Senate Finance Committee unanimously approves Barshefsky’s nomination as USTR. (The New York Times, 01/31/1997)

**February**

At a meeting of the WTO, the U.S. and approximately seventy other countries agree to open their telecommunications markets to foreign competition. Barshefsky heads the team of U.S. negotiators. (The Washington Post, 02/16/1997)

**March**

The Senate confirms Barshefsky as USTR by a vote of 99-1. Before approving her nomination, the Senate approves, by a vote of 98-2, a bill granting Barshefsky a waiver from a law prohibiting the USTR from having represented foreign interests. (The Washington Post, 03/06/1997)

The House grants Barshefsky a waiver from the law prohibiting the USTR from having represented foreign interests. (The Washington Post, 03/12/1997)

**April**

Barshefsky participates in talks between President Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan. President Clinton warns the Japanese Prime Minister that a recent reappearance of a trade surplus with the United States could escalate efforts to force Japan to open its markets, particularly its automobile market. (The New York Times, 04/26/1997)

**May**

Barshefsky lobbies members of Congress for their support of “fast track” legislation that would give the Administration enhanced power to negotiate trade accords. Under the legislation, Congress would have the power to approve or disapprove these accords, but not to amend them. (The New York Times, 05/23/1997)

Barshefsky addresses a group of members of Congress to explain President Clinton’s decision to renew China’s “most-favored-nation” trading status. (The Washington Post, 05/22/1997)

**June**

Barshefsky testifies before the House International Relations Committee regarding the “fast track” legislation. (The Washington Post, 06/11/1997)

**August**

Barshefsky states that Beijing has been “essentially non-responsive” in the latest round of negotiations on China’s entry into the WTO. (The Washington Post, 08/05/1997)

**September**

In an attempt to gain freer access to Japanese harbors, the Administration
imposes sanctions against Japan, fining each Japanese ship that enters an American port $100,000. (*The New York Times*, 09/05/1997)

**October**

The Senate Finance Committee approves the Administration’s “fast track” legislation. (*The New York Times*, 10/02/1997)

**November**

Uncertain that there are enough votes to pass the bill, President Clinton postpones the House vote on “fast track” legislation. (*The Washington Post*, 11/10/1997)

**December**

A WTO panel rules in favor of Japan in a case involving a U.S. complaint that Japan had blocked foreign competition from their photographic film market. Barshefsky states that the Administration is very disappointed in the ruling and that the panel failed to recognize the “cumulative effects” of allowing Japan to keep imports low. (*The Washington Post*, 12/06/1997)


**1998**

**February**

Barshefsky announces that the Clinton Administration is beginning talks with the EU in an attempt to reduce transatlantic trade barriers. (*The Washington Post*, 02/04/1998)

The U.S. reaches an agreement with Taiwan to open the country’s markets to foreign agricultural products and industrial goods. This agreement is a step toward Taiwan’s entry into the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 02/21/1998)

**April**


Barshefsky travels to China and declares that negotiations to admit China into the WTO are “back on track.” (*The Washington Post*, 04/25/1998)

**June**

Barshefsky is part of the delegation accompanying President Clinton to China. After several days of talks with Chinese officials, Barshefsky declares that China is not ready to make the concessions necessary to join the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 06/21/1998)

Barshefsky: 1998-1999

October

A WTO appeals panel overturns a U.S. environmental law requiring that any shrimp imported into the U.S. must be caught with nets that have holes large enough to allow trapped sea turtles to escape. Barshefsky remarks that the ruling “does not suggest that we weaken our environmental laws in any respect.” (The Washington Post, 10/13/1998)

November

Barshefsky meets with President Clinton, Vice President Gore, various Cabinet secretaries, and representatives from the U.S. steel industry regarding solutions to the recent rise in cheap steel imports. (The New York Times, 11/06/1998)

December

U.S. and Canadian trade officials reach an agreement on agricultural exports. Canada agrees to lower barriers on U.S. exports, but not to lower its own exports of meat and grain. Barshefsky comments, “This is a first step, but for American farmers and ranchers it is good news in a trying year.” (The New York Times, 12/05/1998)

The Administration announces the U.S. will impose sanctions on luxury goods from European countries if the EU countries do not open their markets to banana exports from American companies. (The New York Times, 12/22/1998)

1999

January

The Administration decides not to limit imports of foreign steel. Instead, in a report to Congress, the President states that the government should extend a tax break to steel producers. The New York Times reports that Administration officials were divided on this decision, with Barshefsky and Commerce Secretary William Daley urging tougher measures. (The New York Times, 01/08/1999)

March

The U.S. imposes tariffs on European luxury goods. Barshefsky states that the U.S. could not find another way to make the EU remove protections on banana imports. The EU files a complaint with the WTO, stating that the tariffs violate global trade laws. (The Washington Post, 03/05/1999)

Barshefsky travels to China to discuss the country’s entry into the WTO. She remarks that the talks made “important progress,” yet resulted in no agreements. (The Washington Post, 03/05/1999)

The House passes a bill that imposes quotas on U.S. steel imports. In testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on the measure, Barshefsky states that the bill would be “neither in the national interest nor in the interest of the steel industry.” (The New York Times, 03/24/1999)
Barshefsky travels to China to meet with Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji to continue discussions on China’s entry into the WTO. Barshefsky comments that, while there has been important progress, there remain “substantial gaps in critical areas.” (*The New York Times*, 03/31/1999)

**April**

Prime Minister Zhu Rongji visits the U.S., but his talks with President Clinton fail to produce an agreement on China’s entry into the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 04/09/1999)

The WTO approves U.S. sanctions against EU countries in the case involving banana imports. (*Journal of Commerce*, 04/20/1999)

**May**

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces accidentally bomb the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia. Referring to continuing negotiations over China’s entry into the WTO, Barshefsky states, “I’m quite sure they feel they can use what has happened in a manner which they believe will advance their interest.” (*The Washington Post*, 05/13/1999)

**September**

Barshefsky meets with Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng in New Zealand, where they announce that the two countries will resume talks for China’s possible admission into the WTO. (*The New York Times*, 09/10/1999)

**November**

President Clinton sends Barshefsky and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling to China, where, after six days of bargaining, they reach an agreement to support China’s entry into the WTO. The agreement would open China’s markets to foreign telecommunications products, movies, banks, autos, and agricultural and industrial goods. (*The Washington Post*, 11/16/1999)

Protestors occupy Barshefsky’s Washington office, demanding that the United States do more to help poor countries obtain medicine. (*The New York Times*, 11/19/1999)

**December**

In Seattle, members of the WTO meet amidst major protests. Before the meeting, Barshefsky predicts that the talks will produce a new round of major negotiations. But after a week of meetings, she announces that the conference has failed to produce anything significant. (*The Washington Post*, 12/12/1999)

A WTO panel upholds the U.S. Super 301 law against an EU challenge that the law violates international trade regulations. (*The New York Times*, 12/23/1999)
2000

January
The Administration announces that it is intensifying its efforts to get Congress to approve China’s entry into the WTO. Barshefsky meets with Cabinet members to strategize about how to focus their lobbying efforts. (The Washington Post, 01/11/2000)

Barshefsky participates in the 30th annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. This is the first major international trade gathering since the Seattle talks. (The New York Times, 01/31/2000)

February
Barshefsky testifies before the Senate Finance Committee regarding China’s entry into the WTO. (The New York Times, 02/24/2000)

May

July
Barshefsky and Vietnamese Trade Minister Vu Khoan sign an agreement establishing normal trading relations between the two countries. The deal also brings Vietnam into compliance with many WTO regulations, helping its case for entry into the organization. (The Washington Post, 07/13/2000)

Barshefsky negotiates a telecommunications deal with Japan. The Japanese agree to lower the charges that foreign telecommunications companies must pay to reach Japanese customers, thereby increasing competition and potentially saving U.S. companies billions of dollars. (The Washington Post, 07/19/2000)

September
By a vote of 85-15, the Senate approves legislation establishing permanent normal trade relations with China. (The Washington Post, 09/20/2000)

October
Barshefsky travels to Beijing to help spur stalled talks regarding China’s entry into the WTO. (The New York Times, 10/13/2000)

November
George W. Bush defeats Vice President Al Gore in the race for the presidency.

President Clinton decides to delay imposing new sanctions against EU countries in hopes of resolving disputes over banana and beef exports. (The Washington Post, 11/18/2000)

December
At the White House, President Clinton holds his final meeting with EU leaders in hopes of resolving trade disputes before leaving office. However, the leaders reach no resolutions on the banana and beef disputes. (The New York Times, 12/19/2000)
2001

January
Barshefsky is named a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. (The Washington Post, 01/05/2001)

July
Barshefsky becomes Senior International Partner at the law firm Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr LLP. (The New York Times, 07/29/2001)
TIMELINES

- Charlene Barshefsky Timeline, prepared by Jill Abraham, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 11/22/2004.

- Timeline of the Clinton Presidency, prepared by Robbie Robinson, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 05/30/2002.

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CHARLENE BARSHEFSKY


UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Trade Policy and Politics


Barshefsky as USTR


• Elsa Walsh, “The Negotiator,” The New Yorker, 03/18/1996.


World Trade Organization

GATT—Uruguay Round

Information Technology Agreement

Basic Telecommunications Agreement

Financial Services Agreement

The Seattle Talks

Dispute Resolution and the WTO
JAPAN


**China**


Charlene Barshefsky Suggested Topics
Prepared by Jill Abraham
Miller Center, University of Virginia, 11/29/2004

**Joining the Clinton Administration**
- When did you first meet Bill Clinton? Describe your initial impressions of him.
- Did you have a role in the 1992 campaign or transition?
- Discuss how you came to be nominated as Deputy United States Trade Representative (USTR).

**United States Trade Representative**
- What were your main responsibilities as Deputy USTR? Did you have any discussions with the President or anyone else about your duties before assuming your office?
- What were President Clinton’s trade priorities upon assuming the presidency? Did these priorities change throughout his time in office?
- What were Mickey Kantor’s trade priorities as USTR? Describe your working relationship with Kantor.
- How was the office of USTR organized under Mickey Kantor? How were responsibilities distributed among Kantor, his deputies, and the rest of the staff?
- How did you come to be appointed USTR? How did your responsibilities change from your position as Deputy USTR?
- How often did you meet with President Clinton? With whom on the White House staff did you work most closely? On what issues?
- With whom on Capitol Hill did you work most closely? Describe your working relationship with members of Congress. How did you attempt to build support in Congress for various trade policies, such as the Uruguay Round agreement, fast track authority, and other major policies?
- Discuss your role in negotiating major trade agreements. Did you have any involvement in NAFTA? Did you have a role in the Uruguay Round of GATT? Discuss your role in negotiating major trade agreements with Japan and China. What was your involvement in negotiating trade agreements among WTO countries? What were your responsibilities in resolving disputes between the U.S. and other countries through the WTO?

**Trade Policy and Politics in the Clinton Administration**
- How was trade policy made in the Clinton Administration? Who were the important players? What role did government agencies such as the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Labor have in trade policy negotiations?
- Discuss Congress’s role in setting trade policy.
- What role did interest groups play in trade politics during the Clinton Administration?
- How did the New Democratic philosophy impact trade policy? Did this cause conflict within the Democratic Party?

**The Clinton Presidency in Retrospect**
• What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as USTR? What were the most challenging aspects of your job?
• What were Clinton’s greatest assets as President? Assess his strengths and weaknesses as a domestic policymaker, a world leader, and a trade policy leader. Which of his attributes served him best in the presidency?
• What features of the Clinton presidency, and your roles in it, were overlooked or misunderstood by the press?
• What will be the Clinton Administration’s lasting legacy in the area of trade policy?
• How should the Clinton presidency be viewed in history?